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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 12, 2009

Summary: Reports on killing of scores of militants at various fronts in the military offensive in NWFP province, and the Taliban's reprisal in different areas including Peshawar and Darra Adamkhel dominated headlines in all major newspapers on Friday. Newspapers highlighted reports that "33 militants including a cleric were killed in Orakzai air strikes," and a "provincial minister injured in an ambush in Darra Adamkhel." Several major dailies quoted unnamed sources in New Delhi as claiming that U.S. Undersecretary Burns "asked his interlocutors to trim India's consulate in Jalalabad" that Pakistan saw as a distraction in the military campaign against extremists on the Afghan border. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman's remarks that the "renewed American interest in the resumption of Pakistan-India dialogue is a positive sign" also received prominent display. CIA Director Leon Panetta's statement that "Bin Laden was still hiding in Pakistan" received extensive coverage. In a stop-press story, the Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," reported that the "U.S. House of Representatives passes Pakistan military and economic \$ 1.5 billion aid bill."

Most major dailies ran editorials on the precarious security situation in the country with special reference to the ongoing offensive against extremism and militancy. The Lahore-based liberal English language daily, "Daily Times," stressed that "this war has to be fought to the end - the end of the Taliban menace - for which a forceful and enduring national consensus has to be maintained." Toeing the line, the prestigious English daily, "Dawn," also observed that the "army operation should be taken to its logical conclusion and all areas be brought under the control of the government." Commenting on some media reports about presence of some American security personnel at the Peshawar hotel, the second-largest Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," maintained that "if American presence poses a threat to the public, especially the presence of Intelligence people and other officials, then they should be asked to leave [the country]." End Summary.

News Stories

"33 Dead As Jets Pound Orakzai Militants" "The News" (06/12)

"Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jet fighters on Thursday started bombing suspected locations of Taliban militants in the Orakzai tribal agency and the adjoining Hangu district, killing 33 people, including Sunni Supreme Council chief Maulana Muhammad Amin and his nephew, and injuring 29 others. Military officials said Maulana Amin had close links with the Taliban militants."

"Minister Injured in Darra Ambush" "Dawn" (06/12)

"NWFP Minister for Prisons Mian Nisar Gul Kakakhel was seriously injured and his two guards were killed when his convoy was ambushed by suspected militants in Darra Adamkhel on Thursday."

"U.S. Wants India To Trim Mission In Jalalabad, Act On Kashmir"
"Dawn" (06/12)

"Senior U.S. diplomat William Burns gave Indian officials a wish-list on Thursday that aims to revive India-Pakistan peace talks, assures New Delhi of its vital role in Washington's strategy in the region, and retrieves the hope for Kashmiri people to shape their own destiny. Local reports quoted unnamed sources as saying that the visiting U.S. Under-Secretary of State also asked his interlocutors to trim India's consulate in Jalalabad, which Pakistan sees as a distraction in the military campaign against Muslim extremists on the Afghan border."

"U.S. Adopts Pakistan's Stance On Kashmir" "Daily Times" (06/12)

"The U.S. said on Thursday that it wants the Kashmir issue resolved in line with the aspirations of the people of Kashmir - a statement that reflects Pakistan's stance on the long-standing dispute. Addressing a press conference after meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns - on a three-day visit to India - stunned reporters by saying that the Kashmir issue had to be settled in line with the aspirations of Kashmiris."

"Renewed U.S. Push For Pakistan-India Talks Welcomed" "Dawn"
(06/12)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will visit India and Pakistan next month and the Foreign Office in Islamabad sees the renewed American interest in resumption of Pakistan-India dialogue as a positive sign. 'We find it encouraging if a country that is friend to both Pakistan and India is helping in the process,' Foreign office spokesman Abdul Basit said at the weekly media briefing."

"Pakistani Offensive To Help Nab Usama: CIA" "Dawn" (06/12)

"CIA Director Leon Panetta said on Thursday that Pakistan's military offensive against the militants would help the United States catch Osama bin Laden who was still hiding in that country. Mr. Panetta told reporters after a speech on Capitol Hill that finding Bin Laden remained one of CIA's top priorities. The combination of increased CIA activity and the Pakistani military offensive will give the United States a better chance of nabbing him, he added."

"U.S. House Approves Pakistan Aid Boost" "The News," (website)
"Nawa-i-Waqt" (06/12)

"The U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday voted to ramp up aid to Pakistan but lawmakers still need to resolve deep differences on how many strings come attached. The House voted largely along party lines, 238 to 183, to triple U.S. aid to 1.5 billion dollars annually through the 2013 fiscal year, focusing on development spending aimed at weaning Pakistanis away from Islamic extremists. 'This legislation helps to lay the foundation for a stronger, more stable Pakistan,' said Howard Berman, who heads the House Foreign Affairs Committee."

"Congress Urged To Pass ROZs Bill In Days" "Dawn" (06/12)

"The U.S. administration is urging Congress to pass the Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in the next few days so that it could help create jobs for more than two million people displaced during the Swat offensive, says Richard Holbrooke, America's special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. 'It is tremendously important,' said Mr. Holbrooke when asked at a briefing to comment on the ROZs bill. 'And I want to make a point. The area on the Pakistan side of the border, the area covered by these ROZs, is where the refugees are.' A transcript released by the State Department on Thursday quoted Mr. Holbrooke as telling a briefing that he believed the ROZs could help the refugees rebuild their lives."

"One Killed, 30 Injured In Bolan Express Blast" "The News" (06/12)

"A bomb exploded in a coach of Quetta-bound Bolan Express in Dozan area on Thursday, killing one commuter and injuring over 30 others. The Baloch Republican Army (BRA) has claimed responsibility of the blast."

"1 Dead, 9 Cops Hurt In Peshawar Suicide Attack" "The News" (06/12)

"A man was killed and 13 others, including nine cops, sustained injuries in a hand grenade-cum-suicide attack on a police party in Lateefabad area on Ring Road, Peshawar on Thursday night, police said."

"Gun-Battle Near Residence Of Corps Commander In Peshawar" "Dawn" (06/12)

"A heavy exchange of fire took place between law-enforcement agencies and unidentified attackers in front of the Corps Commander House on the Khyber Road, Peshawar on Thursday night, police said. An official of the Eastern Police Station told 'Dawn' that two unidentified attackers were killed after troops guarding residence of the Corps Commander opened fire."

"Waziristan Taliban Behind PC Attack: NWFP Minister" "Daily Times" (06/12)

"NWFP Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain held Taliban groups operating from Waziristan responsible for the Tuesday's suicide car bomb attack on the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar."

"22 Killed As Taliban Attack FC Fort In South Waziristan" "Daily Time" (06/112)

"The army killed 22 Taliban in fierce clashes in South Waziristan, the ISPR said on Thursday. According to reports from Waziristan, the fighting broke out when around 400 Taliban attacked the Siplatoi check-post and the Jandola Fort late on Wednesday, and continued for several hours. Three soldiers died and five were injured in the fight, the military said in a daily update in Rawalpindi."

"66 More Militants Killed, Says ISPR" "The News" (06/12)

"The security forces killed 66 more militants and arrested nine others, while four soldiers also laid down their lives and 12 others sustained injuries in various areas of Malakand, Bannu and South Waziristan Agency, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Thursday. In Frontier Region (FR) Bannu, according to the ISPR update, the security forces secured Kotka Saifullah and Sara Bangal areas."

"5 Militants Killed In Dir Lower; Jets Target Militant Hideouts In Dir Upper" "The News" (06/12)

"Security forces claimed to have killed five militants during an encounter in Kambar area of Dir Lower district on Thursday, while two children were killed in fighting between the armed Lashkar of villagers and militants in Dir Upper. The Pakistan Air Force warplanes fired missiles on suspected hideouts of militants in Shatkas area of Doog Darra in Dir Upper district. Also, four suspected members of a banned militant outfit were captured by the Lashkar from Patrak area early in the morning."

"Taliban Commander Held In Akora Khattak" "The News" (06/12)

"Police and Elite Force in a joint action arrested Qari Khurshid - a close aide of the Swat-based Taliban Commander Maulana Shah Dauran along with two associates in the precincts of Akora Khattak on Thursday."

"Army Confirms 600 Losses In 11 Months" "The News" (06/12)

"Over 600 Pakistani soldiers have been martyred in the last one year in the fight against terror as the spokesman to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General, Athar Abbas says that 1,700 Pakistani soldiers have sacrificed their lives since 9/11 to get their country free of terror."

"Ban's Appeal For Pakistan" "Dawn" (06/12)

"UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon made a fresh appeal to the international community, especially to 'major donors,' on Thursday to help Pakistan overcome the humanitarian crisis as a result of its fight against insurgency."

"Tough Times, Tougher Decisions Ahead" "The News" (06/12)

"The incumbent regime missed virtually all main macro-economic targets set in the budget 2008-09 for the outgoing fiscal that included 5.5 percent Pakistan's real GDP growth, 12 percent inflation, Rupees 1,250 billion revenue and per capita income of 1,085 dollars, reveals the Economic Survey for 2008-09 released in Islamabad on Thursday by Advisor to Prime minister on Finance Shaukat Tarin."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Reclaiming The Frontier Region Cities," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/12)

"Responding late has its disadvantages but the current operation had to come only after national reaction to what the Taliban were doing had become coherent. The main factor that held back the national consensus was the 'Islamic' and 'Sharia' aspects of the Taliban appeal. The nation did not react as much to the inhuman violence of the Taliban as to the violation of the edicts of Islam after the NWFP went into negotiations with the TNSM cleric Sufi Muhammad. Once an all-Pakistan reaction came to the fore the local populations living under the savage control of the warlords became convinced that what they were experiencing was not Islamic utopia but sheer terrorism. The military operation has now inclined them to resist and fight their erstwhile masters.... But this war has to be fought to the end - the end of the Taliban menace - for which a forceful and enduring national consensus has to be maintained."

"Curbing Extremism," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/12)

"An amendment to the Pakistan aid bill moved in the U.S. Congress requires, among other things, that Islamabad implement economic, legal and social reforms that would discourage 'violent Islamic extremism.' Pakistani citizens must demand the same from their government. The fight against extremism in any form concerns Pakistan most deeply and directly, for as events in the country's north-western areas illustrate, extremism and the militancy it sponsors represent a potent threat to the writ of the state. Firstly, of course, the militants must be effectively neutralized. The army operation should be taken to its logical conclusion and all areas be brought under the control of the government, while the millions of people affected must be rehabilitated."

"Peshawar Suicide Attack: U.S. Intelligence Officials Were Target," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/15)

"There are some media reports that the infamous American security agency Black Water's 15 personnel were killed and four were injured in the PC Peshawar suicide attack.... It is known that Marriot Islamabad was also attacked because of Americans presence over there.... If American presence poses a threat to the public, especially the presence of Intelligence people and other officials then they should be asked to leave [the country]."

"Cut-Off Date For Army Operation," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/12)

"Presently, the military operation enjoys almost total support in the country but it is understood that with the passage of time this support would disappear because of associated problems. Under these circumstances, the country can ill-afford prolonging of the operation for an indefinite period and the authorities concerned will have to devise a strategy to bring it to fruition in the shortest possible time."

"Try To Wrap Up Military Operation," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/12)

"This is ironic that the government is expanding the scope of the military operation under U.S. pressure instead of wrapping it up quickly.... Our homeland will be a target of terrorism until the presence of foreign forces in the region and until drone attacks inside Pakistan are stopped.... It is better to withdraw ourselves from this war of American interests."

"Bannu Operation," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/12)

"With the resentment against the terrorist attacks mounting inside the country, many would readily support whatever measures are taken by the government put an end to them. There is, however, a need for extreme caution and care while undertaking a new military operation against a tribe. An entire population - men, women and children - must not be victimized for the misdeeds of a handful of criminals. This is not only unjust, but also harmful for national integrity as this turns the affected population, which thinks it is being unfairly made to suffer, against those conducting the operation. This is precisely what the militants crave for."

"The Situation After Swat," an op-ed by M.A. Niazi in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/12)

"The military is doing something it understands well in fighting an essentially 19th-century frontier war, which does not involve any speedy maneuvering. It will continue combat until it 'wins' in Malakand Division, and then until it is 'victorious' in the tribal areas, particularly the Waziristans. This is probably a good opportunity to ask what the victory is being gained over."

"We Must Prepare For a Long Conflict," an op-ed by Shafqat Mahmood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/12)

"It is time we recognize that what we are experiencing today is also a war. We can hope and pray that its impact would not be as destructive as it was during the world wars or as in recent times in Afghanistan. But, let us not have any doubt; it is going to be a long haul. Our cities and towns and people will pay a price. But, we shall overcome. This will require some doing. Both the state and society will have to prepare for it and be ready.... Let the people get involved in defending themselves. It could become a critical factor in winning this war."

"What Is Holbrooke's Agenda?," an op-ed by Mian Munir Ahmad in the Karachi based Pro-Jamaat-e-Islami weekly magazine "Friday Special", published by daily "Jasarat" (06/12)

"America is planning to use Nawaz Sharif's popularity to safeguard American interest in Pakistan. Another agenda of Richard Holbrooke was that how to bring Nawaz Sharif and President Zardari closer to each other thus he is actively playing role through backdoor diplomacy. U.S. wants to make Nawaz Sharif first to join the federal cabinet, and latter on become the Prime Minister. Following 9/11 incidents, the U.S. has learned from its failures, and now it is deliberately creating conflicts in the region on the basis of ethnicity and sectarianism."

"Obama's Message To Muslims," an op-ed by Asghar Ali Engineer in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/12)

"Obama, too, like American presidents before him, is surrounded by a highly influential Zionist lobby.... However, it does not mean that Obama will have a convenient excuse to do nothing about what he committed himself to in Cairo. The world and especially the Muslim world will watch out for all his actions.... Obama has also given us, Muslims, hope and hope gives the Muslim world confidence in these trying times. Obama may not be able to finally solve the Palestinian problem but his speech has brought good tidings to the Arab, Islamic world."

"Cairo And Beyond," an op-ed by Mowahid Hussain Shah in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/12)

"Obama's speech shows the persuasive power of ideas and imagination. Indeed, his words have made more headway in the Muslim world than all the bombs, missiles, sanction, and threats could have achieved. The force of argument proved more telling than the argument of force."

"Obama's Metaphysics," an op-ed by Dr. A.H. Khayal in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/12)

"If Obama honestly desires to establish peace in the world then he must ensure that man is stripped even of his hands. Only completely handless human beings can be peaceful human beings.... For the last forty-two years, Israel has been chopping off the Palestinians' necks. Actually, Israel does not want a solution. A solution would deprive Israel of its necks-chopping revelry. By imposing a solution, Obama would risk his own neck."

"Obama's Speech, Words Need Action," an op-ed by Ayaz Ahmed Pirzada in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/12)

"The speech in Cairo was a deliberate attempt and an initiation of a process of reconciliation. His clear announcement without mincing words that U.S. is not at war with Islam but is fighting the militants who are killing innocent civilians was meant to give clarity to the new policy and to gain confidence of the Muslims. President Obama's speech was a good beginning to improve the American image in the Muslim world which had got used to see the American administration during the last several years as a bullying power. The world saw the U.S. using brute force and threats to achieve its national objectives punctuated by expressions of 'shock and awe.' Recognizing common humanity is only the beginning of the task. Words alone cannot solve multifarious problems the world is facing. Therefore words have to be matched by deeds. These good intentions will be met if bold actions by the U.S. are taken fully understanding challenges otherwise lack of trust between the U.S. and the Muslim world would continue to remain if not further eroded."

"Obama's Lollypop For Muslim World," an op-ed by Prof. Shamim Akhtar, (Former Chairman Department of International Relations, Karachi University) in Pro-Jamaat-e-Islami weekly magazine "Friday Special" (06/12)

"The President Obama's speech in Cairo is a lollypop to the Muslim world, it was a classic example of hypocrisy, and seemed like a priest was addressing a church service gathering, urging Muslim world to accept aggression of West, stop resisting it and reconcile with it."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson